

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 DRC-01 /134 W

----- 083674

R 161644Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1783

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KIGALI

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 06016

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UG

SUBJECT: SUBSTANTIVE REPORTING ON UGANDA: SOME EDUCATED
GUESSES (AND FRG COMMENTS) ON KAMPALA COUP
ATTEMPT

REF: (A) BONN 4828; (B) BONN 5419

SUMMARY: SINCE THE MARCH 23-24 SHOOTING AND
UNREST IN KAMPALA, DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS ON THE SCENE
HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PIECE TOGETHER AVAILABLE STRANDS OF
INFORMATION IN AN EFFORT TO PRODUCE AN ACCURATE
COMPOSITE OF ACTUAL EVENTS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS WE
HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE FRG FONOFF, THE CONFUSION WHICH
REIGNED AT THE TIME AND THE OBFUSCATION WHICH HAS
SHROUDED THOSE EVENTS SINCE HAVE MADE THE SEARCH FOR
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DEMONSTRABLE FACTS MOST DIFFICULT. STILL, FRG AMBASSADOR

KOPF CONCLUDES HIS REPORT BY NOTING THAT UGANDA'S ADMINISTRATION, ECONOMY, AND TRAFFIC WERE TO ALL APPEARANCES RUNNING NORMALLY SOON AFTER MARCH 23-24. AND AMIN HAS TAKEN OVER THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND FUNCTIONS OF CHIEF OF STATE AFTER ONDOGA'S DEMISE. END SUMMARY.

1. KOPF REPORTED THAT SEVERAL EXPLANATIONS FOR THE MARCH 23-24 UNREST ARE CURRENTLY MAKING THE ROUNDS IN KAMPALA. BRIEFLY, THEY ARE THE FOLLOWING:

2. MILITARY PUTSCH DESIGNED TO OUST AMIN. BUT THIS THEORY IS SEEMINGLY WEAKENED BY THE "TECHNICALLY VERY INCOMPLETE" COUP PREPARATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE HALF-HEARTED ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT RADIO STATION, KOPF NOTES.

3. PRE-EMPTIVE ATTACK BY AMIN TO NIP RUMORED PUTSCH IN THE BUD. KOPF REPORTS THIS THEORY IS ALSO WEAK, RENDERED IMPROBABLE BY THE UNLIKELIHOOD THAT AMIN COULD DESIRE RENEWED DEGRADATION IN UGANDA'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION ON THE EVE OF THE OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS' CONFERENCE (REF B).

4. A SPONTANEOUS OUTBREAK BETWEEN RIVAL ARMY UNITS. EVIDENCE FOR THIS EXPLANATION IS FOUND IN RECENT ARMY CADRE ASSEMBLIES; THE INCITEMENT OF A CADRE GROUP CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH ONDOGA MAY HAVE SPARKED THE SHOOTING.

5. KEY POINT OF CONTENTION AMONG ARMY OFFICERS INVOLVED WAS ACTUALLY GROUNDED IN RELIGION. KOPF REPORTS THAT THE PRIME EXPONENT OF THIS THEORY IS SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR HABABI WHO "FOR OBVIOUS REASONS FINDS FAVOR WITH (AMIN) AND IS WELL INFORMED". ACCORDING TO HABABI, THE APPEARANCE OF QADHAFI CREATED BAD FEELINGS NOT ONLY IN STUDENT CIRCLES BUT ALSO AMONG CERTAIN MILITARY OFFICERS SUCH AS ARUBE, AND FUELED LONG-STANDING FEARS OF A COMPLETE ELIMINATION OF CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS FROM THE ARMY LEADERSHIP. KOPF NOTES THAT ONE MIGHT DOUBT THIS THEORY, GIVEN THE RELATIVELY CLOSE INTER-RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CHURCH OF UGANDA, CATHOLICISM
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AND ISLAM. AND THE FRG AMBASSADOR COMMENTS THAT ONE MUST BEAR IN MIND THE VIEWPOINT WITH WHICH HABABI - LIKE HIS KING - VIEWS THE WHOLE AFFAIR.

6. THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE PLAYED A ROLE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THEIR KEY ROLE IN ARMY TRAINING AND REARMAMENT. OBSERVERS HOLDING TO THIS VIEW NOTE THAT ONDOGA WAS UGANDA'S AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW FOR TWO YEARS AND THAT

ARUBE HAD HAD SIX MONTHS TRAINING IN THE SOVIET CAPITAL.
AMIN HAD HASTENED TO STRESS AT A MARCH 25 RECEPTION THAT
ARUBE HAD NOT BEEN BRAINWASHED IN MOSCOW. THIS LATTER,
KOPF BELIEVES, RINGS A BIT FALSE, SINCE AMIN HAS PRO-
TESTED TOO MUCH. IN ANY CASE, ACCORDING TO THE FRG
AMBASSADOR, HIS SOVIET COLLEAGUE HAS SEEN A "FRENZIED
PERSONAL SIX-MONTH CAMPAIGN TO DOWNPLAY ARUBE'S SOVIET
TRAINING COME TO NOTHING.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 06016

7. THE OFFICIAL VERSION, THAT THE SHOOTING RESULTED FROM
A PLOT AMONG THOSE WITH WEAK NERVES, IS VIEWED AS
UNLIKELY COMPARED TO THEORIES ADVANCED ABOVE: THERE IS
TOO MUCH EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY.

8. KOPF MENTIONS THAT THE OFFICIAL MEDICAL REPORT, BY A SCOTTISH DOCTOR WHEN ARUBE WAS DELIVERED TO THE MULAGO HOSPITAL, HAS BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER VOICE OF UGANDA. THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF SUICIDE AS CAUSE OF DEATH DOES NOT SQUARE WITH THE DOCTOR'S REPORT, ACCORDING TO KOPF.

9. AMIN'S WIVES. THE FRG REPORT NOTES AMIN'S EFFORTS, TWO DAYS AFTER THE UNREST, TO DIVORCE HIMSELF FROM HIS FIRST THREE WIVES, MAMA MALYAMU, KAY AND NORA, AND KEEP CONFIDENTIAL

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ONLY WIFE NUMBER FOUR MEDINA. CLEAR INTENT OF THESE ACTIONS WAS JUDGED TO BE DIVERSION FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEKEND'S EVENTS.

10. KOPF CONCLUDES THAT THE FOLLOWING CAN BE ASSERTED WITH SOME SAFETY: THERE WAS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ONDOGA AND ARUBE AFFAIRS. THERE WAS AN INTERNECINE QUARREL BETWEEN ARMY UNITS. PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THE ARMY REMAINS LIMITED. AND UGANDAN COOPERATION, TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER MUSTOPHA RAMATHAN WONDERED ALOUD TO KOPF ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED IF AMIN HAD BEEN ABROAD WHEN THE UNSETTLING EVENTS OF MARCH 23-24 TOOK PLACE?
HILLENBRAND

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